



## Fact sheet - Creating your Flora for Fauna Garden

### Keeping your Native Plants Healthy

**Information courtesy:** Kuranga Native Nursery, 393 Maroondah Hwy, Ringwood, Victoria

Iron deficiency is a very common disorder in native plants and examples may be found in most gardens which contain a reasonable selection of Australian plants.

Iron deficiency is easily recognised by a yellowing of the new shoots, accompanied by a slowing down in the rate of growth. If the plant is not treated, the yellowing may extend further back down the stem and eventually the plant may become completely yellow and stop growing altogether.

Iron deficiency symptoms can result for a number of reasons, the most common being:

#### **Alkaline soils**

Alkaline soils tie up iron and render it unavailable to plants. Often plants close to concrete or brickwork suffer from iron deficiency because lime leaches out of the mortar and creates localised alkaline 'hot spots'.

#### **Poor drainage**

Waterlogging renders iron unavailable to plants. This can be an important factor for plants in pots where drainage holes may be impeded or where a good quality potting mix is not being used.

#### **Excessive levels of other elements**

This is unlikely to occur in the garden but is a common reason for iron deficiency symptoms in potted plants where the plants have been fed too heavily with fertilisers, particularly phosphorus.

#### **Treatment**

Iron deficiency is easily treated with an application of iron chelates, which is applied through a spray pack or watering can, onto affected foliage. Apply a thorough coverage as only those parts of the plant sprayed will green up. The foliage should start to green up within two weeks, although one or two repeated applications may be necessary. Applying iron to the soil is unnecessary and generally wasted, as the iron is quickly transformed into a state where it is rendered unavailable to the roots of plants.





## Commonly affected plants.

While iron deficiency symptoms have been observed in almost every Australian plant genus, the following plant groups have shown themselves to be particularly frequent offenders.

- ▶ Baekia
- ▶ Banksia
- ▶ Boronia
- ▶ Brachysema
- ▶ Calytrix
- ▶ Chamaelaucium
- ▶ Correa
- ▶ Crowea
- ▶ Darwinia
- ▶ Dilwynia
- ▶ Eriostemon
- ▶ Eutaxia
- ▶ Grevillea
- ▶ Hakea
- ▶ Hibbertia
- ▶ Hovea
- ▶ Hypocalymma
- ▶ Persoonia
- ▶ Phebelium
- ▶ Pultenaea
- ▶ Thryptomene

### Further information

Talk to your local Flora for Fauna Garden Centre about caring for your native plants and garden.

